



Rhode Island State Police

General Order - 55A

<i>Section:</i>	Law Enforcement Operations - Field Operations
<i>Article:</i>	55 - Communications
<i>Title:</i>	Communications
<i>Special Instructions:</i>	

I. PURPOSE

To provide communication guidelines to Division members in the use of radio, telephone, telecommunication, and informational systems.

II. POLICY

The Division of State Police recognizes the need to provide and maintain a systematic ability to fight crime, handle emergencies, and respond to calls for public service in the most efficient and effective manner possible. This need requires a superior communications system.

III. PROCEDURES

A. TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES UNIT

1. It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor of the Technology and Communication Services Unit to monitor and oversee the operation of all, telephone, telecommunications, and information systems operations.
2. The Technology and Communication Services Unit supervisor shall be responsible for all radio operations to include, but not limited to:
 - a. Ensuring appropriate compliance with all applicable Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and state licensing regulatory requirements;
 - b. Ensuring the periodic inspection of all communication facilities;
 - c. Acting as the Division's liaison with outside agencies and vendors in all matters concerning communication functions.

B. RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

1. The Division will ensure a 24-hour, two-way radio capability by providing continuous communication accessibility, through a multi-channel radio system capable of two-way operations on joint public safety frequencies. All Division members shall be equipped with multi-channel portable radios capable of two-way operations on joint public safety frequencies.

2. Field Personnel Duties and Responsibilities:

- a. Patrol Troopers shall utilize their assigned cruiser radios or portable radios when communicating with other cars or state police facilities.
- b. When applicable, members will interact with other agencies via the wide area 2 talk group.
- c. At the beginning of each shift, Patrol Troopers shall utilize assigned cruiser radio to call "in service" to their assigned barracks. By advising that they are in service, The Patrol Trooper is verifying that:
 - i. Trooper is in the proper uniform of the day
 - ii. Trooper is in their respective patrol area
 - iii. Trooper has all required duty gear required for the shift
 - iv. Trooper has checked cruiser and found it negative for any contraband
- d. Late Patrol and other night-related patrols are required to check-in by radio with their respective barracks every hour.
 - i. Northern area patrols and other night related patrols will check-in every hour on the hour from 10:00PM through 6:00AM.
 - ii. Southern area patrols will check-in every hour on the half hour from 10:30AM through 6:30AM.
- e. Cell Phone Use - In accordance with RIGL §31-22-31, Division members are prohibited from utilizing hand-held cellular devices while operating a Division vehicle.
 - i. In an emergency, and if while in the performance of official duties and within the scope of law enforcement employment, sworn members may utilize a hand-held cellular phone while driving.
 - ii. If lengthy information needs to be exchanged with supervisory personnel or the office trooper, Members shall use a hands-free device or pull to the side of the road in a safe and inconspicuous manner to conduct the call.
 - iii. If the Division's radio system becomes inoperable, cell phones may also be used as a secondary means of communication.
 - iv. If cell phones are used for communication all duties and responsibilities for field personnel will remain the same.

- f. Field personnel shall advise the supervisor, via radio, for reasons, to include, but limited to:
 - i. Upon affecting an arrest;
 - ii. When planning to affect an arrest at a location on a court warrant and/or affidavit & arrest warrant;
 - iii. When investigating a complaint or crime of more than a routine nature;
 - iv. All accidents involving personal injury;
 - v. When requesting supervisory assistance.

3. Office Personnel Duties and Responsibilities:

- a. Generally, access to Division Headquarters and barracks communication centers will be limited to those persons who operate and command the centers and to others specifically authorized by reason of their position.
- b. Personnel assigned to Division barracks or unit communication centers will have immediate access to the following resources:
 - i. Supervisor in charge of the individual barracks or unit;
 - ii. Duty roster of all assigned personnel;
 - iii. Emergency list of all assigned personnel;
 - iv. Area fire departments;
 - v. Ambulance/emergency medical services;
 - vi. Tow trucks and service vehicles;
 - vii. Foreign language specialists;
 - viii. State and local highway departments;
 - ix. Juvenile service agencies;
 - x. Mental Health agencies;
 - xi. Department of Environmental Management;
 - xii. Public service/utility companies;
 - xiii. Federal/State/Local law enforcement agencies.
- c. Assigned office personnel at Division communication installations will perform all dispatching and radio communications in a professional manner and in compliance with FCC regulations and Division policies, procedures, and directives.
- d. Office personnel shall:
 - i. Monitor police radio frequencies and disseminate pertinent information to patrols in a timely manner.
 - ii. Answer all telephone calls for service from the public and other agencies, dispatching patrols as necessary, and maintaining service status of designated personnel. Service status indicators shall be visually available to communications personnel.

- iii. Maintain a record of all necessary communications in the CAD system;
 - iv. Perform all computerized communication functions, such as those relating to administrative messages and criminal inquiries through the use of the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), Interstate Identification and Indexing (III) System, National Law Enforcement Telecommunications Service (NLETS), Rhode Island Law Enforcement Telecommunications Service (RILETS), Rhode Island State Police Records Management System, etc.
 - v. Ensure that all Division radio messages are given first priority. Office personnel will not advise mobile units to "standby" unless an emergency situation exists and the radio call cannot be answered immediately. Likewise, mobile units will answer radio calls from installations as soon as possible.
- e. Office personnel will determine the immediacy of calls for service based on the facts and dispatch member(s) to the location, continually updating member(s) as information is received. The Division cites the following circumstances as a partial list of times when additional personnel should be sent to a scene:
- i. Assault on a police officer;
 - ii. An on-scene arrest for a felony or violent misdemeanor;
 - iii. Resistance to arrest, distraught suspects;
 - iv. Incidents involving the use of force;
 - v. A crime in progress;
 - vi. A fleeing suspect;
 - vii. Serious motor vehicle accidents or accidents in a particularly hazardous location;
 - viii. Domestic disturbance
- f. Supervisors shall be required to respond to the scene of incidents that fall outside the scope of normal patrol duties to assume command and request additional resources. A partial list of these crimes, incidents, and investigations includes:
- i. Murder;
 - ii. Robbery;
 - iii. Sexual Assault;
 - iv. Kidnapping;
 - v. Extortion;
 - vi. Motor vehicle accidents involving death or serious personal injury;
 - vii. Certain narcotics investigations requiring undercover assistance;

- viii. Informant information where time is of the essence;
 - ix. Escape from custody by particularly dangerous prisoners.
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- g. All office personnel assigned to Division communication installations will have immediate access to any tactical dispatching plans or the Unusual Occurrence Policy that may affect facilities in their jurisdiction.
 - h. All Division communication facilities will be equipped with topographical maps detailing the service area of the facility. These maps will be located and will be readily available and easily accessible to communications personnel.
 - i. The Division will accept emergency messages from civilians or other law enforcement agencies and will attempt to:
 - i. Notify the next of kin in the event of death, medical emergency, or traffic accident;
 - ii. Notify persons to make an emergency telephone call concerning a death, medical emergency, etc.;
 - iii. Notify family members or friends of stranded motorists whose motor vehicle is disabled and/or will be delayed.
 - j. Whenever communications or office personnel receive an emergency message, he/she shall notify the barracks/unit supervisor and dispatch a member.
 - i. Members that respond to the proper address will deliver the message in a conscientious and professional manner.
 - ii. In the event a message cannot be delivered, the responding member will notify the office person who will then notify the reporting party that no contact was made.
 - j. Monitor "Signal 55" and "Clear Signal 55" radio transmissions to their respective State Police facility. If clearance is not made by the member within fifteen (15) minutes of the initial traffic stop, the office member shall contact the member to confirm his/her well-being. If such confirmation cannot be adequately secured, additional members and/or other police personnel will be dispatched to the member's last known location.
 - k. When applicable, members will interact with other agencies via the wide area 2 talk group.
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- 4. Radio Procedures:
 - a. To eliminate lengthy radio transmissions and maintain confidentiality, the following codes for communication installations and radio transmissions will be used, whenever practicable:

i.

FACILITY	CODE
i. Division Headquarters	X1
ii. Scituate Barracks	X3
iii. Lincoln Barracks	X4
iv. TMC	X5
v. Portsmouth Barracks	K1
vi. Wickford Barracks	K2
vii. Hope Valley Barracks	K3
viii. Detective Bureau	Detectives
ix. Special Investigations Unit	Station I
x. NCIC/Information	Control

- ii. Individual patrol units will be designated by the member's badge number. In patrol situations where two or more members are assigned together, the badge number of the higher-ranking member or most senior member will be the badge number utilized.
- iii. Proper identification must be established between the transmitting unit and the receiving unit, e.g. "X4 to 50." Trooper 50 should then reply, "50, go ahead."
 - 1.) At the conclusion of the transmission, the receiving unit shall acknowledge, "10-4, received."
 - 2.) At the conclusion of a radio transmission involving a communication installation, said installation shall sign off reporting the time and badge number of the transmitting member.
 - 3.) Members will speak clearly and distinctly when transmitting. Members will not shout or mumble during radio transmissions.
- iv. The following phonetic alphabet will be utilized to clarify radio communications, when necessary:

a)	AAdam
b)	BBoston
c)	CCharles
d)	DDavid
e)	EEdward
f)	FFrank
g)	GGeorge
h)	HHarry
i)	IIda

j)	J.....John
k)	K.....King
l)	L.....Lincoln
m)	M.....Mary
n)	N.....Newport
o)	O.....Ocean
p)	P.....Peter
q)	Q.....Queen
r)	R.....Robert
s)	S.....Sam
t)	T.....Tom
u)	U.....Union
v)	V.....Victor
w)	W.....William
x)	X.....Xray
y)	Y.....Yale
z)	Z.....Zebra

- v. All Division vehicle and portable radio channels shall be aligned in the following manner:

CHANNEL	USE
Channel 1	Patrol
Channel 2	Car-to-Car
Channel 3	North Zone
Channel 4	South Zone
Channel 5	Area Detective
Channel 6	Detail
Channel 7	Information
Channel 8	Wide Area 2

- vi. The following "Signal" designations will be used to describe patrol activities:

SIGNAL	DESIGNATION
Signal 1	Telephone – Barracks/Unit
Signal 2	Return to Barracks/Unit
Signal 3	Telephone or Return to Barracks/Unit
Signal 5	Accident
Signal 6	Do Not Transmit
Signal 8	Clears Signal 6
Signal 10	Hit & Run Accident

Signal 11	Bomb/NBC Threat*
Signal 12	NCIC or Local Warrant "Hit"
Signal 15	Armed Robbery
Signal 20	Stolen Vehicle
Signal 30	Missing/Lost Person
Signal 50	Drunk Driver
Signal 55	Traffic Stop
Signal 55 Clear	Traffic Stop Clear
Signal 75	Traffic Stop Search

*NBC=Nuclear/Biological/Chemical

- vii. The following Code/Designation will be utilized to prioritize unit response to calls for service:

CODE	DESIGNATION
Code 1	Respond at your convenience.
Code 2	Respond without delay, without lights and siren.
Code 3	Expedite with lights and siren, as applicable.

Also see GO-55B, entitled "Call Response Priorities."

- viii. The following Code/Designation will be used to describe criminal history inquiries:

CODE	DESIGNATION
Code 1	Narcotics
Code 1A	Cocaine
Code 1B	Heroin
Code 1C	Marijuana
Code 1D	LSD
Code 1E	Needle & Syringe
Code 2	Weapons
Code 2A	Gun
Code 2B	Knife
Code 2C	Bludgeon
Code 2D	Other Weapon
Code 3	Murder
Code 3A	Murder of Police Officer
Code 3B	Manslaughter

Code 4	Robbery
Code 4A	Armed Robbery
Code 4B	Bank Robbery
Code 4C	Other Robbery
Code 5	Sexual Assault
Code 5A	1 st Degree
Code 5B	2 nd Degree
Code 5C	Other Sexual Assault
Code 6	Stolen Motor Vehicle
Code 6A	Tampering with Auto
Code 7	Burglary
Code 7A	Breaking & Entering
Code 7B	Breaking & Entering w/Larceny
Code 8	Assault
Code 8A	Assault with Dangerous Weapon
Code 8B	Assault on Police Officer
Code 8C	Domestic Assault
Code 8D	Other Assault
Code 9	Disorderly Conduct
Code 9A	Domestic Disorderly
Code 10	Motor Vehicle
Code 10A	Suspended License
Code 10B	DWI
Code 10C	Eluding
Code 10D	Hit & Run
Code 11	Larceny
Code 11A	Shoplifting
Code 11B	Receiving Stolen Goods
Code 11C	Possession of Stolen Goods
Code 12	Obstruction of a Police Officer
Code 12A	Resisting Arrest
Code 12B	Making False Report
Code 13	Fraud
Code 13A	Violation of Banking Laws
Code 13B	Forgery

Code 13C	Counterfeiting
Code 13D	Embezzlement
Code 13E	Credit Card Fraud
Code 13F	Computer Fraud
Code 14	Served Time in Prison
Code 14A	Escape
Code 14B	Parole Violation
Code 14C	Probation Violation
Code 15	Miscellaneous

5. Portable Radio Panic Alarm Response - Each Division member will be issued portable radios equipped with a panic alarm/button function.

When Front office personnel receive an activation of a portable radio panic alarm:

- a. Immediately attempt radio contact with Division member to determine status;
- b. If no response is received or there is a possible duress situation, additional Division member(s) will be dispatched to the last known location for the Division member;
- c. Front office personnel shall utilize the radio Playback System to check for a "Signal 55 transmission" to assist in determining a last known location for the Division member;
- d. Alternate forms of communication may also be considered for non-responses to a Division member status, to include cell phone and telephone notifications.

C. TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Each Division facility responsible for receiving emergency related telephone calls shall be equipped with a single emergency telephone number that is in operation on a 24-hour basis along with the ability to receive Emergency 911 telephone calls. These emergency telephone numbers, which are prominently displayed in area phone books are as follows:

- a. Division Headquarters444-1111
- b. Scituate Barracks568-3011
- c. Lincoln Barracks444-1100

- d. Portsmouth Barracks849-4444
- e. Wickford Barracks.....294-3322
- f. Hope Valley Barracks539-2323

2. The administrative telephone numbers for each facility are as follows:

- a. Division Headquarters444-1000
- b. Scituate Barracks764-5420
- c. Lincoln Barracks335-3339
- d. Portsmouth Barracks294-3371
- e. Wickford Barracks.....294-3371
- a. Hope Valley Barracks539-2323

3. Telephone Answering:

- a. All Division telephones will be answered professionally and courteously in the following manner:
 - i. When answering outside telephone calls, all members will state the name of the Division facility, followed by the member's rank and last name, e.g. "State Police Lincoln Barracks, Trooper Smith."
 - ii. When answering telephone calls transferred within the Division's telephone network or transferred from one office to another, the member should answer by stating his or her rank and last name, e.g. "Sergeant Jones."
 - iii. In those offices where the telephone is answered by civilian staff, the civilian staff answering the call will identify the member by stating, "Captain Smith's office."
- b. Since a vast majority of calls for police services provided by the Division are requested by telephone, it is imperative that members gather as much relevant information as possible at the time of the request. These requests are not limited to complaints received over the telephone but may also include, in person or letter, requests for services as well as complaints initiated by members.

The information recorded in the CAD system at the time of the request should include, at a minimum:

 - i. Call for service #;
 - ii. Date and time;
 - iii. Name and address of complainant, if possible
 - iv. Type incident reported;
 - v. Location of incident reported;

- vi. Time of dispatch and member assigned;
 - vii. Time of member's arrival;
 - viii. Back-up officers dispatched and time of arrival;
 - ix. Time of member's return to service after incident;
 - x. Disposition or status of the reported incident.
- c. Requests from victim/witness for assistance, information or services
- i. Office personnel shall judge the characteristics of the victim/witness telephone call to determine whether an emergency or non-emergency response is required.
 - ii. Office personnel will determine the immediacy of the emergency based on the facts. In the event the office member has any indecision as to the response required involving the possible victim/witness, he/she will immediately contact the officer in charge and advise them of the facts.
 - iii. In all circumstances, the office personnel shall make all attempts to get the telephone number of the victim/witness and shall keep them on the line as long as possible to obtain as accurate information as possible.
 - iv. The victim/witness will be appropriately advised if law enforcement or Victim/Witness advocate response will be initiated.
 - v. In the case of an emergency involving persons in the victim/witness program, the office personnel shall ensure that the Division responds accordingly to this emergency to abate the situation prior to referral to the Rhode Island Department of the Attorney General.
- d. Whenever an emergency call is received, and the nature or jurisdiction of the call is more appropriate for another barracks or agency, the Division member receiving the call will
- i. Obtain all relevant information;
 - ii. Advise the caller of the action to be taken, whether a Division response will be forthcoming and/or another more appropriate agency will be notified; and,
 - iii. Contact the more appropriate agency with the information for them to respond.

D. NOTIFICATIONS OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

The following circumstances require the associated procedures:

1. When the expertise of the Medical Examiner is needed for examination of a deceased person, it will be the responsibility of the on-scene member of the Forensic Services Unit to request the services of the Medical Examiner.
2. When roadway conditions need repair, road plowing, sign replacement, traffic control light repair, or the attention of highway department personnel, it will be the duty of the office person to make such notification without delay. Patrol members shall be vigilant to report highway conditions that require attention by either the state or local highway maintenance personnel. Notation will be made in the CAD system as to the time of such notice shall be made by the office member.
3. When a need for public utility repair is made known to patrol personnel, it will be forwarded to and become the responsibility of the member assigned to the office member to notify the proper utility. The exact location and nature of the problem will be telephoned to the utility, as well as a notation made in the CAD system. Patrol members will not instruct a complainant to call the utility, as an emergency condition may not allow another call to be made.
4. Notice to news media:
 - a. At the direction of the Public Information officer, barracks Patrol Commanders, Assistant Patrol Commanders, or their designees may provide notice to the local news media on routine matters. These matters include minor motor vehicle accidents, routine arrests, or incidents of local interest. If uncertain whether or not to divulge information, the matter will be referred to the District Commander for guidance.
 - b. In matters of ongoing criminal investigations, the news media will be referred to Headquarters, where the appropriate District Commander will issue any statement. No Division member shall give his/her personal opinion, advice, or criticism in such matters.
 - c. There may be occasions when notice of traffic concerns or the broadcast of certain information may serve the public's need. In the event of traffic hazards or adverse road conditions, the office person may make appropriate information, such as alternate routes, known to the media.
5. When the fire department and/or emergency medical services are needed at a scene, the first responder shall request the appropriate services through their respective communications center personnel. The first responder shall provide, at a minimum, the location, extent of the problem(s) and any other ancillary information. The office member will then make the request for fire and/or emergency medical services via the telephone or radio.

E. TELECOMMUNICATIONS

All sworn and non-sworn office and communications personnel shall follow the prescribed procedures set forth in the NCIC Operating Manual and the RILETS Operating Manual which are accessible to all personnel via RILETS NexTest training and certification intranet web portal. Civilian communications personnel and members of the Technical Services Unit will also be aware of and follow the prescribed procedures as set forth in the NLETS Operating Manual.

F. RADIO AND TELEPHONE RECORDING AND PLAYBACK

1. All Division communication centers are equipped with radio and telephone recording equipment which shall record designated radio frequencies and designated emergency telephone lines on a 24- hour basis. All personnel assigned to communication centers will receive instruction in the operation and use of these recording devices. Each communication center shall display basic operating procedures near the recorder.
2. Desktop computers at each communication center will be equipped with message replay software. This software will allow all users to instantly play back radio and telephone messages that were recorded within the past 24 hours.
3. Commissioned officer desktop computers will be equipped with scenario replay software. The scenario software allows supervisors or technical support to search for and capture recordings stored at multiple communication centers. In addition, scenario replay allows commissioned officers and technical services staff to search all recordings on file without the 24-hour time limit.
4. The recording systems store recorded data on an internal hard drive. The systems also are connected to a SAN network which automatically stores a back-up of recorded data.
5. The playback of a recorded message or telephone call may be made only for a legitimate police purpose.
 - a. Immediate Playback
 - i. The indiscriminate playing back of the Division's recorded messages is strictly prohibited.
 - ii. Office or communications personnel may use the immediate playback feature for legitimate police purposes, including by not limited to identifying caller/witness/victim, confirming response location/address and contact information.

- b. Investigation-related Playback – Requests to replay a recorded radio transmission or telephone call after 24 hours and/or obtain a copy of a recorded radio transmission or telephone call shall be submitted to the commissioned officer in the member's chain of command.

G. ALARM MONITORING

1. The Division will monitor private and business alarms in the following manner:
 - a. When an alarm call is received, the Office Member will log all appropriate information in the CAD system.
 - b. If adequate staffing is available, two (2) members should be dispatched to the alarm along with being given all applicable information.
 - c. The result of the member's response will be communicated to the respective office member for logging in the CAD system and notification to the alarm company.
 - d. Only one (1) member can be dispatched to:
 - i. False alarms in a 24-hour period;
 - ii. Verify false alarms'
 - iii. Multiple alarms in the same area during power surges.
2. The Division reserves the right to prioritize such calls for service as it deems necessary and may or may not dispatch personnel to physically respond to any said alarmed premises. The Division also may or may not call off any responding member to said alarmed premises and re-dispatch the responding member to another call.

H. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT:

1. Communication Centers Security Measures:
 - a. Access to barracks/unit communication centers will be limited to office personnel, supervisors, and other essential communications personnel. The public will be restricted from these areas.
 - b. All equipment located in the communication centers or radio room of any Division facility is to be protected. Only those persons who are properly trained will be permitted to operate the equipment.
2. An alternative power source, sufficient to operate the radio systems and other vital equipment, will be located at each Division facility and accessible only to authorized personnel. This alternative power source will ensure continual operation of emergency communication equipment

in the event of a failure of the primary power source. All emergency generators at Division facilities will be inspected and tested weekly, and appropriate documentation retained for inspection.

3. All State Police radio communication centers are equipped with two sources of radio communications. The main system runs off of the Microwave Towers, while the back-up system runs strictly off of a dedicated transmitter. While this makes our radio communications independent of most circumstances that would disable a communications center, troopers will immediately notify headquarters if this should occur. An alternate barracks communication center would then take over the necessary communications.
4. Off-site antennae will be protected by fences while on-site antennae will be protected by either a fence, security camera or combination thereof.

IV. PROVISIONS

- A. Members are not authorized to provide emergency first aid instruction over the telephone or radio.
- B. Any radio malfunction shall be immediately reported to the Patrol Commander, Assistant Patrol Commander, Night Executive Officer or Unit Supervisor who will notify the Radio Technicians.



By Order of Colonel Assumpico

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann C. Assumpico".

Ann C. Assumpico
Colonel
Superintendent